

# STRATEGIES TO REDUCE CAREGIVER STRESS

## ACCEPT HELP

- Identify the biggest caregiving hurdle and brainstorm solutions with a trusted family member or friend.
- For those in the “sandwich generation” providing care for parents and children, carefully assess stressors. Discuss ways to simplify and assign responsibilities to others in the home.
- Schedule a Care Plan visit every year at Memory & Movement Charlotte (MMC) to identify and discuss strategies for:
  - The home situation and care needs
  - Stressors and management techniques
  - Future planning
- Read the website document *Creating a Care Team* for more information on how best to allow others to help.

## SELF-CARE

- Share concerns with the MMC team of experts, who are skilled in assisting with ways to reduce stress.
- Connect with a member of your Care Team for support.
- Attend a caregiver support group.
- Talk with a counselor or therapist experienced in life transitions, chronic illness, and caregiver stress. Referrals can be made through MMC or by visiting the website [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com)
- Annual physicals with the Primary Care Physician are essential to monitor health.
- Engage in positive experiences regularly such as:

- Watching an old sitcom
  - Viewing funny puppy videos online
  - Reading the comics
  - Playing a game
- Identify activities that create moments of joy and perform them more often.
  - Practice mindfulness – being present in the moment and noticing the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings surrounding it.
  - Schedule alone time to disconnect from the stressors and engage in relaxing activities that promote peace, such as:
    - Prayer
    - Meditation
    - Yoga
    - Taking a walk
    - Listening to or reading an inspirational message
    - Taking a warm bath
    - Manicure or pedicure
    - Massage
    - Visiting a park or museum
    - Dining at a new restaurant (or an old favorite)
  - Create an area in the home specifically for relaxing, complete with a comfortable seating area and a stand for placing a book, cup, or plant. Use the area as a retreat during the day.
  - Perform hands-on activities that engage the mind, like crafts, arranging flowers, or woodworking.
  - Designate one day per week to accomplish tasks associated with running the home (e.g., paying bills, making phone calls, running errands, etc.)
  - Consider reducing the number of hours spent at work outside the home or reduce the number of projects. If feasible, request a personal leave from work under the Family Medical Leave Act. Discuss options with the employer.



## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Engaging in activities with the care recipient can refocus attention on meaningful interactions, rather than care responsibilities.
- Read the website document Engagement Activities for more information.